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The ABC's of Good Nutrition

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A broadcast by Dr. Louise Stanley, Bureau of Home Economics, Dr. Russell Wilder, Chairman of the Food and Nutrition Committee of the National Research Council, and Mr. Wallace Kadderly, Office of Information, broadcast Tuesday, July 1, 1941, in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, over stations associated with the NBC Blue Network.

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WALLACE KADDERLY:

Now to continue with another of our Tuesday series on human nutrition. We have as our guests today two more eminent authorities on what to eat and why. Here at my right is Dr. Louise Stanley, well known to many of you as the Chief of the Bureau of Home Economics in the Department of Agriculture. But what some may not know is that Dr. Stanley earned her title of doctor, her Ph.D., by her research in human nutrition at Yale University.

And sitting across the table from Dr. Stanley, as our other guest, is Dr. Russell Wilder, chairman of the Food and Nutrition Committee of the National Research Council. Mr. Wilder, a doctor of medicine by the way, has also carried on original research in human nutrition, especially on Vitamin B<sub>1</sub>.

And we remember too, Dr. Wilder, the time you were with us on the Farm and Home Hour before, bringing us news about the new enriched flour and bread. We were very glad to have that news direct from headquarters.

DR. RUSSELL WILDER:

The idea of the enriched bread seems to be taking hold extremely well. In fact, right now the demand for enriching white flour and bread is running ahead of the supply of some of the vitamin concentrates necessary to do the job. But in another six months or so we expect that will all be straightened out. Then we hope all white flour and white bread will contain the vitamins and iron we recommended. The idea was to put back into the white flour a good share of the food values of the natural grain refined out in the milling process.

KADDERLY:

Good. That brings us up to date on the enriched flour and bread situation.

And, Dr. Stanley, I understand that today you and Dr. Wilder are going to start down at rock bottom with some of our ideas about food and what our bodies need to get from the food we eat. We've been hearing so much about vitamins that it wouldn't be surprising if some of us got the idea that vitamins are all there is to good diet.

DR. LOUISE STANLEY:

That would be unfortunate from the nutrition standpoint ... just at the moment perhaps the vitamins are in the class with spoiled children ... getting more than their fair share of attention.

WILDER:

Spoiled children often have to be "stood in the corner" till they can calm down and take their normal place in the family circle. We don't want that to happen

(Over)

WILDER (Cont.)  
to the vitamins. A well balanced diet calls for good team work from all the food nutrients.

KADDERLY:

Food nutrients ... now that's getting a little technical for me.

WILDER:

Nutrient is a word I'd like to see more used in our everyday language. It comes from the same root as nutrition. It carries with it the same idea of nourishing the body and promoting growth.

KADDERLY:

A nutrient is a food substance that nourishes the body then.

WILDER:

Exactly.

KADDERLY:

All right. Now keeping this still in ABC's, I'd like to know just what it is these nutrients are supposed to do for us.

STANLEY:

Instead of nutrients, one might say what the right food does for us.

KADDERLY:

That word food always rings the bell, Dr. Stanley.

STANLEY:

The right food builds and repairs your body ... keeps it in good running order ... gives you energy for work and play ...

WILDER:

Helps prolong the prime of life ...

STANLEY:

And helps to lay the basis for good health all through life.

KADDERLY:

I don't see how we could get any closer to rock bottom than that.

STANLEY:

That's what we're working for by good diet. That's our goal.

WILDER:

Now I'd like to suggest an idea for building the diet to meet that goal ... a four-square kind of a diet that will stand all stresses and strains.

You know the Egyptians discovered years ago that the most enduring structure is the pyramid.

KADDERLY:

I believe the pyramids they built are still standing to prove that, Dr. Wilder.

WILDER:

Lately I've been thinking about good diet as a pyramid. With the state of the world what it is we must be strong. We must have endurance. The food we eat will help us to have that endurance.

STANLEY:

If the food furnishes the things our bodies need.

WILDER:

That's right, Dr. Stanley. That is essential.

So I propose that the base of this pyramid ... the four sides like the sides of a square ... be built of these four food constituents ... protein ... iron ... calcium ... calories for energy.

KADDERLY:

Would you go along with that, Dr. Stanley?

STANLEY:

Yes. That's good sound building ... The protein, and calcium, and iron are body builders. We get those in milk, and meat, and eggs, and other foods. And the calories for energy come mostly from starches, sugars, and fats.

KADDERLY:

I've got my four-square base drawn in here ... protein, iron, calcium, calories. But where's the pyramid?

STANLEY:

I'm waiting for that too.

WILDER:

That's very polite of you, Dr. Stanley. But I know you've guessed already. The sloping edges of the pyramid are the four groups of vitamins - the A, B, C, and D groups.

STANLEY:

Yes, of course we all have to have vitamins and certain minerals or we can't make use of the other nutrients effectively.

KADDERLY:

Then I'll just draw four lines in this square --- one from each corner, as though I were looking straight down on this pyramid from above. That's one line for vitamins of the A group, ... another for the B group, ... a third for C, ... and a fourth for vitamin D.



WILDER:

Right. That pyramid represents the good diet. Now you can use this same pyramid idea to show what each food or group of foods contributes to the diet.

Let's take milk for instance which is as near a perfect food as we have.

KADDERLY:

Say the word and my pencil will start.

STANLEY:

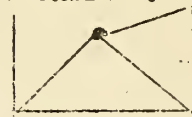
One side protein ... two, calcium ... three, calories ...

WILDER:

Now, toward the center a line for vitamin A, and one for vitamin B. And if it's vitamin D enriched milk - another diagonal for vitamin D.

KADDERLY:

That's fun ... like Chinese writing.



WILDER:

Same idea exactly. Chinese writing is by ideograms. These are ideograms of food ... Dr. Stanley, you at it too?

STANLEY:

Yes, here's the picture for meat - lean meat ... and for whole wheat flour.

Meat



Whole Wheat



Meat furnishes protein, iron, calories, and B vitamins ... Whole wheat flour furnishes calories, iron, and vitamins of the B group. I'm not including protein because the proteins of wheat are incomplete. They're not on a par with the proteins of meat and milk.

WILDER:

That's right. These straight lines can't tell the whole story. On the protein side, we mustn't forget quality as well as quantity. Animal proteins are of a much higher quality than most of the proteins of vegetable origin.

KADDERLY:

This certainly is a clever way to show what food lacks as well as what it furnishes. And these pictograms certainly do show a person that he needs to eat lots of kinds of food if he's to get his full quota of these various nutrients ... Or maybe I should say if he's to build a diet as strong as the pyramids of Egypt.

WILDER:

I believe very deeply that the power of people to work and to withstand hardship is very closely related to food.

There's an old saying - "The food we eat today, talks and thinks for us tomorrow." I have very clear-cut scientific proof of that. I've seen people lose ambition and get jittery and quarrelsome when they stayed on a diet lacking only in one nutrient, thiamin. When thiamin was restored to their diets and everything else stayed the same, they became like different persons. They took an interest in life. They went about their daily jobs in a normal way.

STANLEY:

But I think you believe as I do, Dr. Wilder, that so far as possible we should rely on natural foods to give us what we need in our diet.

WILDER:

Right. But in actual fact we eat much flour, sugar, and fat from which vitamins and minerals have been removed. These refined staples ought to be improved by restoring to them what they have lost. I would not put in more than they have lost.

STANLEY:

But how about your recommendation of adding vitamin D to milk? That's going further than restoring anything the milk has lost.

WILDER:

True. But the same principle applies. By adding vitamin D we make cows' milk more like human milk which naturally contains more vitamin D.

STANLEY:

Yes, vitamin D is a vitamin we mostly have to manufacture by letting the sun's rays act on the skin. The trouble is that we wear too many clothes and much of the year the sun is too low in the sky to do much good.

WILDER:

Exactly. And since the natural foods provide so little vitamin D, I strongly advise everyone to use bottled milk or evaporated milk to which vitamin D has been added.

STANLEY:

The rest of our vitamins and our other food nutrients we have to get from plants, or from animals who get them from plants.

KADDERLY:

Well that brings us right down to the grass roots as well as to bed rock. I appreciate, Dr. Stanley and Dr. Wilder, that this conversation has hardly scratched the surface of nutrition as far as you are concerned. But you've given us some good ideas to work out in our own daily diet plans. And we appreciate very much your coming over and sharing those ideas with us.

And I hope you don't mind, Dr. Stanley, if I suggest that any of our Farm and Home listeners who wants your home economics bulletins on diet may just drop a card to the Bureau of Home Economics?

STANLEY:

We are very glad to have them, Mr. Kadderly.

KADDERLY:

Here are two bulletins that we haven't mentioned in some time. Food for Children and Good Food Habits for Children ... both very important to getting the younger generation off to a good start. Ad lib offer.

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